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Technological Race: Technologically, the U.S. armed forces have managed to keep ahead of the Soviet war machine. But in the last few years, the Russians have been catching up with giant strides.

One Pentagon report estimates that the Soviets outspent us in research and development, testing and evaluation by almost 45 percent, or \$75 billion, in the decade of the 1970s. "Currently, the estimated annual dollar cost of Soviet military RTD&E activities exceed those of the United States by approximately 100 percent," the report warns.

One area in which Soviet scientists have been particularly successful is the development of composite materials. These are combinations of chemically different materials arranged to obtain properties the materials do not have separately. The whole, in other words, is greater than the sum of its parts.

A top-secret CIA report, seen by my associate Dale Van Atta, explains the significance of this seemingly unexciting technological advance.

"The U.S.S.R. has made major strides in the use of advanced forms of composite materials in such weapons as offensive and defensive missiles, aircraft and tanks," the CIA reports. "Composites cut weights and costs, provide protection against radiation and high temperatures, and reduce the effects of vibration and fatigue."